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# CONQUEST, COLONIAL EDUCATION AND CULTURAL UPROOTEDNESS IN AFRICA — THE ROLE OF EDUCATION FOR HUNHU\UBUNTU IN DE-ROOTING THE AFRICAN IN ZIMBABWE

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## Abstract

*There is disagreement between colonial and post-colonial Africanist historiography over the impact of colonial education on the indigenes of Africa. The former maintain that colonial education benefited the Africans tremendously as it brought them (the Africans) civilization and enlightenment (Temu & Swai; 1981, Majeke, 1986). However, the latter are not quite agreeable to this position as they argue that colonial education had more negative effects than positive effects. Notwithstanding the benefits of Western education to the Africans it had the major negative effect on the Africans of culturally uprooting the Africans from their autochthonous culture consciously or otherwise, into a foreign and alien Western culture.. The argument of this paper is that colonial education was and is still instrumental in culturally uprooting the African from his/her indigenous culture into a foreign Western culture. Cognisant of the preceding, this paper intends to examine the role of colonial education in this regard and in the same spirit is proposing a type of education, namely education for hunhu\ubuntu (Makuva, 1996) as the modus vivendi in efforts to de-root the African. Education is being singled out for this purpose precisely because if education was instrumental in culturally uprooting the African, it too must be instrumental in de-rooting the African. This paper is an effort toward contributing to the debate on cultural uprootedness in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular and possible ways of containing it.*

## Background

Professional historians especially those who subscribe to post-colonial critical Africanist historiography do concede that it was because of wars of conquest by foreign imperial powers on African peoples that Africa was colonized. In other words it was because African states were subjected to wars of conquest by the 'north' that they were subsequently and ultimately colonized (Temu &

Swai, 1981; Boahen, 1987; O'Callaghan, 1977; Majeke, 1986; Carnoy, 1974). The aim of any war is first to defeat or conquer the adversary by whatever means and then secondly to impose one's will on the vanquished (Ramose, 1983; Walzer, 1977; Howard, 1982). The two objectives are complementary since conquest or defeat which is military or political is incomplete – to complete it, it must be accompanied by mental or psychological conquest (Walzer, 1977; Ngugu wa Thiongo, 1986). It needs to be submitted that while the former can be sudden, the latter in most cases is rather slow, gradual and very effective.

To achieve the former, each side in the 'duel' makes use of **anything** at its disposal to make the enemy incapable of any further resistance. However, it needs to be pointed out that certain means of achieving this objective, for instance the use of nuclear arms has been prohibited as irrational because of its destructive intensity whereby both the winner and the defeated perish, thereby defeating the whole purpose of ever having engaged in war (Ramose, 1989). To achieve the latter which is parasitic on the former, the conqueror again adopts strategies and tactics at his disposal with the express purpose of controlling and imposing his will on the vanquished. Some of these tactics which can be very subtle, but all the same very effective, can include, amongst other things brainwashing and propaganda mostly carried out through education of one form or another.

Western imperial powers in their conquest and colonization of Africa especially Zimbabwe, were probably aware of these dynamics of warfare. They probably knew that attaining military conquest over the Africans was only half way to attaining their desired goal of conquering and imposing their will on the Africans. To consolidate their defeat and conquest, they needed to conquer the Africans mentally or culturally precisely because

economic and political control can never be complete without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-determination in relationship to others (Ngugu wa Thiongo, 1986:6).

To further achieve this conquest they embarked on a deliberate programme of culturally uprooting the Africans from their autochthonous culture into a European culture which was foreign and alien to them. Thus, in order to impose their will on the will of the Africans, both of which are products of specific cultures, they had to uproot them (Africans) into theirs (Europeans). They did this in order that Africans could become easily exploitable.

Uprootedness like conquest is both overt and covert, sudden and gradual and also multifaceted. Literally, uprootedness might refer to the rooting out or pulling up by the roots of say, a flower or a tree (Geddie, 1952). It might also refer to the forced removal of people "from usual place of domicile into exile or unceremonious displacement from usual home" (Mupedziswa, 1993: XXIV). Before commenting on the preceding definitions it needs to be pointed out that the term, even in its literary sense, has overtones of force and compulsion. There is no mutual consent between the uprooted and the uprooter and this is quite consistent with the reality of conquest and defeat and the imposition of one's will. Our position with respect to the meaning of the term 'uprooted' is that we agree with Mupedziswa's definition to some extent, but we propose to expand it further to make it more comprehensive and relevant to our discussion and thesis. The contention of this paper is that uprooted, apart from and in addition to people being forcibly removed from their, not 'usual', but rather **original** homes, we propose to extend it to include 'forcible removal from one's culture into new and alien ones. Another essential dimension to add to the notion of uprootedness is that physical removal from one's original home is not a sufficient condition of uprootedness. In fact, it is possible for one to be uprooted but still remain domicile in his/her home or country of origin. When that situation obtains, as is common not only in Africa but in all once conquered, and colonized peoples, then we talk of cultural uprootedness. In other words, it is uprootedness, not in the physical sense, but rather in the cultural and spiritual sense. This type of uprootedness is very complicated, subtle and sad; complicated, subtle and sad because the victim in most cases may not be aware of the predicament that he/she is in; sad especially these days when one finds someone actually yearning to be uprooted and not being concerned of the fundamental implications. It is, therefore, this type of uprootedness, the cultural and spiritual one, which is of concern to this investigation. Specifically, this paper would like to examine how colonial education in Africa and particularly in Zimbabwe, was methodologically instrumental in culturally uprooting the Africans. This investigation is being made against the thesis that indeed colonial education was/is instrumental in culturally uprooting the African (Majeke, 1986; Carnoy, 1974; Rodney, 1972; Mazrui, 1993). In further pursuit of this argument this paper is also contending that, since education contributed significantly towards the uprooting of the Africans from their culture, then it should, indeed, be instrumental in their cultural liberation and redemption. In other words, it should equally be engaged in efforts towards de-rooting the Africans culturally. It is precisely in light of the preceding, therefore, that this paper proposes education for *hunu/ubuntu* as the *modus operandi* in efforts toward the possible de-rooting of the African (Makuva, 1995). Admittedly, culture is dynamic

and there is no way one can hope to recapture genuine indigenous culture in its wholeness. However, we maintain that it is still possible to glean from our past certain essential elements of our culture which have managed to stand the test of time. One essential element, amongst others, which has managed to remain unchanged is the element of *hunhu\ubuntu*. It is, therefore, this crucial element which can be interrogated as a basis in efforts to resuscitate our damaged and uprooted personhood.

### Colonial Education and African 'Uprootedness'

This paper is informed by the argument that colonial education as given to the Africans by the colonizers during colonization was instrumental consciously or otherwise in uprooting the Africans from their culture into a foreign western culture. The intention consciously or otherwise was to facilitate their imperial and capitalist interests in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. However, what is of immediate concern to this paper are the strategies adopted to realize this end.

It can be argued that amongst several strategies at their disposal, colonizers opted for formal education as a methodological tool in uprooting the Africans culturally. Thus, it is being argued that the pedagogical content and aims of education adopted for the Africans were meant to serve this purpose (Rodney, 1972; Carnoy, 1974; Mungazi, 1991; Crowder, 1968). To begin with, it is maintained especially by post-colonial Africanist historiography that the education they provided for the Africans was *irrelevant* as it was imported and imposed on the Africans (Luthuli, 1982; Mungazi, 1991; Temu & Swai, 1981). It was especially so because the Africans had their own indigenous education which meaningfully served their own existential needs, thereby being relevant to them (Sifuna, 1990; Ocitti, 1994). Further, it was irrelevant because the main aims of colonial education, viz, to facilitate conversion of Africans to Christianity and to give the Africans training needed to fulfill European needs for exploitative labour as that was not in the interests of the Africans (O'Callaghan, 1977). Apart and in addition to the education being irrelevant, even the religion they were so eager to initiate the Africans into, was equally irrelevant and unnecessary given that the Africans were a deeply religious people. The only problem was that their religion was not considered as such by the conquerors and, therefore, these conquerors believed that Africans needed a religion. This could not be surprising given that the Africans were a vanquished people and as such the interests of the victor prevail. Moreover, such kind of exploitative behaviour was quite consistent with the capitalist womb from where the colonizers came (Majeke, 1986).

Our position in view of the preceding, especially with special reference to education, is that culture is the **content** of any education if that education is to address the needs of the intended beneficiaries. In fact, for any education to be relevant, it must both be a product of, and a response to the people's concrete existential conditions. Such an education should evolve from and be guided by the people's philosophy of life articulated or otherwise (Luthuli, 1982). Since the education that the settlers provided for the Africans came from an alien culture, it means it was initially intended for recipients of that culture who happened not to be Africans but Europeans. It means if it were a relevant education it was initially designed to meet the concrete existential needs of people not in Africa but in Europe. It follows, therefore, that this same education could not meet the existential needs of the new African recipients because it was never intended for them in the first place. It is in this light that it is being urged that the education the Africans received was therefore irrelevant to them but of course not to the colonizers. In view of our thesis and the relationship between culture and education as briefly pointed out above it needs to be submitted that as the Africans were receiving colonial education so were they being systematically uprooted unconsciously from their own culture into an alien culture. Thus, the more they were being exposed to Western education, the more they were being uprooted and being ushered into western culture.

A brief examination of a few selected subjects in the curriculum would help demonstrate how, indeed, education contributed towards culturally uprooting the African. For instance in Geography, pupils were supposed to learn about the geography of Europe and America before learning in detail about Africa or Zimbabwe for that matter. The author vividly remembers when he was in secondary school, that they were made to memorise capital cities of Europe, the great Lakes and the Prairies of America and Canada before learning in some detail the geography of Africa or Zimbabwe. In History, it was the same: all European and American history first before African history. The little African history in both primary and secondary education was very scanty and distorted (Vansina, 1965; Majeke, 1986). In fact, it was only included to highlight and project European 'heroic' historic figures and their 'contributions' to the civilization, redemption and enlightenment of the Africans. However, what needs to be established is why it was necessary to distort and marginalize Africa while, on the other hand, emphasizing Europe. The tendency by colonial education to marginalise the teaching of the history of Africa was probably based on erroneous and distorted theories and myths about Africa and its peoples (Majeke, 1986; O'Callaghan, 1977; Vansina, 1965; Mungazi, 1991). For instance, it was generally maintained by the 'centre' that, "there was nothing in

the African past worth writing about. Whenever they cared to look, which seldom enough, all they could discern was stagnation quickened by the advent of Europe through conquest" (Vansina, 1965: 6). According to this view from the 'centre', the African was a-historical. The a-historicity of the African was also further corroborated by Coupland, an 'eminent' history teacher at Oxford University who maintained that "African history had begun in the 19th century. Before then there had been nothing or nothing worth of attention. The main body of the African had stayed for untold centuries sunk in barbarism, stagnant neither going forward nor going back (Vansina, 1965: 6).

Such were the views of the 'north' about the 'south' held by 'professional' historians and educators who constituted and influenced colonial historiography subscribed to by colonial historiography, urging for the supposed a-historicity of Africa. These are the kind of distortions about Africa which influenced the teaching of history to the Africans resulting not only in the marginalisation and quarrying of African history, but also in questioning the African humaneness. It is such assertions which have been declared by post-colonial Africanist historiography as "mythical and aberrant, a travesty of the imperial method which in the 19th century had helped usher in the dawn of scientific, that is critical historiography" (Temu & Swai, 1981: 21). Indeed, such assertions were a travesty, a desire to camouflage and justify the real intentions the 'north' had on Africa. The net effect of all these and the peripherisation of African history on the African and the European was the development of a corresponding inferiority-superiority complex. The African, because of his supposed a-historicity was made to learn European history and at the same time being unconsciously ushered into a foreign European culture. Since **his** history was being denied him he was made to accept European history as **his**, thereby being uprooted from his history and culture into a foreign and alien one. With further uprootedness, the African started shunning his culture in blind preference to European culture. Little did the African realize that he/she was trying to run away from his authenticity and Africanness.

Another subject in colonial the curriculum for Africans that played a significant role in uprooting the Africans from their culture was the teaching of religion — Christianity to be exact. Precisely because the first schools for the Africans were established by missionaries (Atkinson, 1972; Mumbengegwi, 1989; Unesco, 1980), the education provided was inevitably Christian education. The aim of such an education was to "facilitate conversion to Christianity" (O'Callaghan, 1977: 15). Since religion, like education, evolves and reflects a particular culture, and perpetuates that particular culture, the education that



missionaries provided for the Africans provided western culture, the 'womb' from which missionaries came (Majeke, 1986). Missionaries also operated from a flawed premise that the Africans were irreligious, barbaric and heathen and, therefore, needed some religion. In pursuance of this position they went about condemning everything the African believed in as part of his religion. In so doing they were condemning his culture. Little, of course, did the missionaries realize that the African was deeply religious with religion permeating every aspect of the African's life. In place of African traditional religion, they introduced in many cases forcibly, their religion- Christianity. Thus, after uprooting the African by condemning his religion they then rooted him in a foreign culture by forcing him to accept Christianity.

The most outstanding subject in the African education curriculum that contributed and even continues to do so now to African uprootedness was the teaching of English. To begin with, in addition to all instruction being given in English and not in vernacular there was a separate subject in the syllabus called English that was compulsory. At each level, be it primary or secondary school, English had the more periods to it, showing how important it was regarded. In other schools pupils were not allowed to speak in vernacular except during vernacular lessons that unfortunately were given very little space on the timetable. In fact at high school vernacular lessons were even taught in English with the option of even answering examination questions in English. The preceding picture demonstrates the importance which was placed on the learning of English by the colonial education administrators.

In light of our discussion, what needs to be established is why such emphasis was placed on the learning of English by the Africans and also what was the possible impact on the African was in view of the earlier submission that any language is a vehicle of a particular culture. Possible reasons can be hazarded. One possible explanation could be that since at the beginning of the introduction of formal education to Africans they were no trained African teachers, the only available 'teachers' were missionaries who could not teach in vernacular because it was foreign to them. So in as much as vernacular was foreign to them so was English to their students. Rather than them learning vernacular in order to communicate, they settled for the easier option of making the Africans learn their language which again points to the dynamics of conquest. Another explanation could be that colonial administrators needed cheap labour and semi skilled personnel in their offices whom they could communicate with and who could assist them to run the system (O'Callaghan, 1978). Such personnel had

to speak English and the only way was, therefore, to emphasize English. That the settlers opted to teach English should not be surprising as they were being consistent with the unfounded myths and paradigms which informed their coming to Africa. How, for instance, would the real and civilized people stoop so low as to learn the language of primitive and uncivilized sub-humans (James, 1972)? The settlers could not learn the African languages because to do so would have been tantamount to affirming African humaneness, a thing they were denying. Furthermore, for them to learn the language of the people they had conquered would not have been consistent with the dynamics of warfare and conquest, namely that as a sign of defeat and conquest the defeated necessarily learn the language of the masters. It can also be surmised that probably they did not take learning vernacular language seriously because they knew the implications of learning another people's language that one cannot learn another people's language without at the same time learning their culture as well.

The position of this paper with respect of the preceding is that language is at the center of cultural preservation and promotion. In fact "language is sometimes regarded as a reservoir of culture which controls human thought and sets boundaries of the worldview of its users" (Mazrui, 1993:351). This observation is further corroborated by Mwaura (1980: 27) who contends that,

languages influence the way we perceive reality, evaluate and conduct ourselves with respect to it. Speakers of different languages and cultures see the universe differently and behave towards it differently. Speakers of different languages do not have the same world view or perceive the same reality unless they have a similar culture or background.

A very close quasi-deterministic relationship between culture and language can be deduced from the preceding discussion whereby in order to overcome a particular perception of reality one has first to "escape from the prison-house of the corresponding language" (Mazrui, 1993: 351). In other words, in order to make sense of another culture one has to know the language of that culture. Precisely, "language, any language has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture" (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986: 13). From the preceding argument, it can be deduced that language does not only communicate culture, it also carries culture. Implying that the culture which is inherent in any language can "actually be transposed onto the speakers of another unrelated language" (Mazrui, 1993: 352). In the process of transposing the language one is at the same time transposing the culture of that language onto

the culture of another people. Accordingly, the Africans, through the western education they were receiving through English as a foreign language, were being systematically ushered into a different and alien culture. In line with our argument, one can say that they were being culturally uprooted, a situation that is sadly manifesting itself in present day Africa and Zimbabwe in particular.

### **Manifestations of cultural uprootedness and the impact of information technology and the global village — The Zimbabwean Case.**

The effects of conquest and colonization cannot be wished away overnight, not even with the attainment of political independence. Much as we might wish that the effects disappear with the attainment of self-rule, they still live and haunt the people for a very long time. Part of the reason why the effects cannot simply disappear depends on the length of the conquest. If a people had been conquered for a very long time like the case of Zimbabwe, it means the effects had become part of the people's lifestyle and resistance to change in this regard is likely to occur more if there is no clear ideology and a committed leadership to spearhead the desired changes. Such is the case with Zimbabwe — 28 years down the line, she still has to contend with the effects of conquest, colonisation and cultural uprootedness.

Cultural uprootedness in the colonized manifests itself at various levels of society and in various ways and degrees. It manifests itself in the manner people dress, talk, behave toward their own culture, traditions and institutions. It is also evident in the people's false consciousness and in the people's lack of confidence and pride in themselves as people. It manifests itself in the people's tastes and choice of foreign art, music, food and entertainment, all of this at the expense of local products. Given the limited scope of this paper we shall not be able to examine all the above listed aspects but just a few. In our examination of the selected items, we shall focus on the individual and then government. Thus, we shall be trying to demonstrate how individuals and governments of once colonized states show signs of uprootedness. It must be admitted at the onset that these signs of uprootedness at government and individual levels are a genuine reaction and response to centuries of being negatively labeled, defined, marginalized and dehumanized..

Uprootedness manifests itself at governmental level by most governments of once colonized states in Africa in their attempts to always turn to the occidentals

for paradigms of development; paradigms which because they are adopted uncritically are not only costly to implement but are irrelevant to the genuine existential needs of the intended beneficiaries. In addition, African governments still turn to their 'masters' for solutions to problems in their countries. Ironically, some of these problems either originate or are engineered by their yesteryear masters to perpetuate the master-slave relationship. Against this background one questions firstly, the wisdom of turning to such sources for help and, secondly, the genuineness of the assistance and solutions provided, for one wonders whether African governments do not realize that some solutions from the 'north' are not genuine since they are intended consciously or otherwise to entrench the African dependence on them. The preceding position can best be explained in the context of a people who have been, for a very long time, defined negatively resulting in them losing confidence in themselves as independent and equal human beings like anyone else. Because the people's confidence has been undermined for a long time, the tendency is always to look up to the 'north' for approval and solutions. Even governments are not confident to do 'things' the African way because the 'African' may not be acceptable to 'big brother'. Precisely because the African has been made to accept his/her inferiority and the coloniser's superiority as real, therefore, any African solution to an African problem is inferior. The tendency by governments to always look up to the 'north' for advice has spilt onto youths who have developed a rather false feeling that it is 'greener' elsewhere.

Cultural uprootedness manifests itself glaringly in the youth's dislike of everything traditional and their strong preference for everything and anything Western and foreign. This is evidenced for instance in their taste and preference of music, fashion and lifestyle just to mention a few. With respect to fashion, one just has to visit major urban cities in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular to see how the youths are making frantic efforts to be like **them**. Look at the way they speak, walk and talk. Rather than speak English like Africans they make frantic efforts to speak it like **them**. Another interesting observation with respect to fashion especially by the youths is that on average Africans especially in Zimbabwe are shorter and have shorter hair than Europeans. But because to be **real** according to the African youth is to be like the former masters, tall and long haired, African youths and adults as well are making frantic efforts to be tall by buying very expensive high heeled shoes. To make their kinky hair long like **theirs** they are now into artificial hair and dreadlocks. Unfortunately the former masters know these feelings of inadequacy and incompleteness by the African youths and their yearning to be complete and be accepted, the former masters proceed to exploit them by producing these products and selling them

to the youths. What the youth do not seem to know is that it is not a crime or a sign of incompleteness to be short or to have kinky hair or to be 'black', nor is it a blessing to be otherwise. What the African youths are very loudly but silently saying is that if they could have their way they would rather not be Africans. According to them being European is to be humane and being African is to be a-human and therefore a curse. By aping the west they are trying to be humane like everyone else and everyone else excludes fellow Africans.

Another area in which the youth show evidence of uprootedness is in their taste of music and reading materials. In their desire to be fashionable the African youth, especially in Zimbabwe, strongly prefers foreign Western music, dance styles and foreign novels. Some even declare knowing a lot about these foreign artistes and novels than they do local artistes like Oliver Mtukudzi or novelists like Charles Mungoshi. What they do not realize is that in their preference for these foreign artistes and novelists they are indirectly saying they are preferring these foreign cultures at the expense of theirs for what else is contained in the foreign music or foreign novels than those people' cultures? Their dislike of everything traditional and African is also displayed in their dislike of their mother tongue. The Zimbabwean youth today are more proficient in the English language than in their vernacular languages. The irony of it is that they are even proud of it as if it is quite some achievement. They do not only speak English fairly well comparatively to their mother tongue but even make frantic efforts to imitate some of the European mannerisms and intonations. Some even go to the extent of making exaggerated mistakes in their vernacular. To get a slight feel of what is being portrayed, one just has to listen to some ZBC announcers over the radio or female receptionists talking on the phone. One gets shocked when these Europeanised announcers appear live on television and one discovers that they are in fact black Africans. One only wishes if the amount of time and effort they put into trying unsuccessfully to be European was exerted into trying to be more African.

Parents, unfortunately, have quite a significant role to play in the manner the youth shun being African. Parents who should be giving corrective guidance to the youths for behaviour deemed culturally untoward are ironically found to be on the forefront of literally culturally uprooting and misdirecting their children. Most parents are quite happy when their children in school are able to speak aenfglish very well but are rather indifferent when the same child cannot speak vernacular. In fact, some affluent parents actually encourage the speaking of English in their homes and to ensure that their children speak English

better than vernacular. They actually make sacrifices to send their children to exclusively English speaking schools to ensure that their children are as proficient in English as they are ignorant in their mother language. All this can be explained historically and even currently where the ability to be proficient in English was taken as a sign of educatedness and therefore a ticket to white-collar employment. Precisely because our education is for employment facilitation, then no wonder parents are so concerned about their children's ability not only to speak English but even to behave like them. The children have accepted this situation that being able to speak English is a sign of educatedness and make little effort at seriously learning their language. At university, for instance, first-year students ridicule those who are studying for a BA (Hons) in Shona or Ndebele. Accordingly, the percentage of culture and tradition illiterates among university degree graduates is very high and students are not even ashamed of their ignorance. Ironically and sadly, cultural uprootedness has become the index of educatedness, progress, and status especially among the neo-rich, neo-privileged and newly empowered. In light of the preceding, parents should be at the forefront of de-educating their children in this regard both by word and by deed.

What can be deduced from the preceding discussion is that these behaviour manifestations examined above are a natural response of a people who either have been or have inherited conquest and colonization not only politically but also mentally and culturally, notwithstanding of course the effects (positive and negative) of globalisation and the impact of information technology (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986; Mazrui, 1993). However, even in this global village it is advised that people should still maintain their identity and should not allow themselves to be swallowed. These behaviours are evidence of an uprooted people who have been misdefined and have unfortunately internalized those misdefinitions as true to the extent that to the African in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, to be, is to be like and to be like is to be either like another African who is more like a European or a European proper (Makuvaza, 1996). Unfortunately, no matter how Africans Europeanise themselves there are like "like bastards who want to profit from goods to which they have right" (Garcia, 1986: 222). In other words, no matter how proficient Africans can be in the Western culture they will still remain strangers.

What then needs to be done for these uprooted Africans in light of their mimetic and inauthentic existence is that they need to be de-rooted not by the 'masters' but rather by themselves. These uprooted Africans must be made to see sense that the life of being perpetual strangers is inauthentic. Unfortunately, problems

will be confronted in trying to make them realize that they have been uprooted and therefore need de-rooting because as the wise saying in Shona goes *chakabaya chikatyokera*. Notwithstanding these problems still efforts must be made **dialogically** to make these people see sense, and this paper is one of such humble efforts.

### **Implications for and challenges to national identity and sovereignty**

Uprootedness in its multifacetedness has implications for patriotism, national identity and sovereignty. Precisely because people are uprooted, they lack a sense of national identity and pride in themselves and in their country. Because they are like 'bastards' and 'strangers' they do not really know where they belong. They do not know whether they are Africans or Europeans, for they do not have roots or confidence in either. They are like a **bat** which is neither a bird nor an animal. Uprootedness also poses serious challenges to national sovereignty and national development. For as long as nations still look up **uncritically** to their former masters for solutions and paradigms of development they will never realize meaningful development and sovereignty. In fact by so doing they will be undermining their own sovereignty. Once-colonized nations need to realize that there is a distinction between development, modernisation and westernisation.

### **Towards de-rooting the African — The role of education for *hunhu/ubuntu***

Post-colonial Africanist historiography's current concern especially in Africa is on producing a liberative historiography whose concern and aim are to demystify, correct and challenge theories and 'Great Lies' from the 'centre' about itself but more so about Africa (Majeke, 1986; Temu & Swai, 1981; Garcia, 1986). Such theories amongst other things have had the effect of uprooting the African from his existential roots. In contributing towards this liberative historiography, this investigation proposes a philosophy of *hunhu/ubuntu* and education for *hunhu/ubuntu* as the only methodological tool in culturally de-rooting the African. Cultural de-rootedness, in light of cultural uprootedness becomes worthwhile for the once-conquered and colonized. The argument of this paper is that for liberation to be genuine, meaningful and realistic it should not only be political and economical but mental and cultural as well. De-rootedness becomes particularly important in view of the inauthentic

and mimetic existence of the conquered, colonised and uprooted who are unaware that they are wearing someone else's shoes which are either too big or too small for them (Garcia, 1986).

In an attempt to de-root the African especially the black Zimbabwean in particular, the point of departure is on philosophy and education. Our position first with respect to philosophy is that apart from it being a product of a particular cultural milieu it has a deconstructive and reconstructive function of analyzing existential human conditions (Floistad, 1987; Garcia, 1986; Halverson, 1976). In other words if philosophy is to be relevant then it should not only deconstruct but also reconstruct reality. For instance in the present context philosophy as discussed above should try to address and redress the issue of cultural uprootedness within the context of the African black Zimbabwean. A specific philosophy that seeks to address the issue of cultural uprootedness with a view to de-rooting it must be worked out. It is this particular philosophy – philosophy of *hunhu/ubuntu* which must be investigated and engaged in order to redress the damages caused by uprootedness to the African culture and personhood. The assumption following from the preceding being that the African's identity, personality and confidence have been greatly dented by their encounter with conquest and colonization. The Afro-Zimbabwean *hunhu/ubuntu* has been damaged. Philosophy of *hunhu/ubuntu* must, among other things, try to restore the lost Africanness which centred on *hunhu/ubuntu*.

The second point of departure in this discussion of uprootedness is on education. Education is of interest to this discussion because, like philosophy it is a product of culture as well as a carrier of that culture (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986). Apart from evolving from a particular culture it also seeks to address existential issues arising from that culture if that education is to be deemed relevant. Education is of interest to this paper because as earlier mentioned - it was instrumental in mentally and culturally uprooting the African, it should equally be instrumental in mentally de-colonising and de-rooting the African (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986; Majke, 1986; Rodney, 1972; Carnoy, 1974). However, this type of education should be qualitatively different from the imported colonial education. This type of education that we propose to call education for *hunhu/ubuntu* must evolve from the African environment and must be guided by a philosophy of education evolving from an African philosophy of life (Luthuli, 1982). This education, it is being argued, is the *sine qua non* in efforts to bring about cultural de-rootedness among the black- Zimbabweans.



By education for *hunhu/ubuntu*, we mean a type of education evolving from a liberating philosophy of education emanating from an African philosophy of life all of which center around the crucial African concept of *hunhu/ubuntu* (Makuvaza, 1995). This philosophy is deconstructive, reconstructive and liberative, deconstructive as it is a critique of the effects of occidental education on the African resulting in cultural uprooting the African; reconstructive and liberative as in the place of colonial education, it offers itself as a possible replacement seeking to de-root the black African especially in Zimbabwe but also to liberate both the Africans and the colonizers from the effects of the distortions they have internalized (James, 1972; Njobe, 1990; Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986; Mazrui, 1993; Garcia, 1986).

### Conclusion, Recommendations and the Way Forward

The focus of this paper has been on trying to demonstrate the impact of conquest and colonial education on the Africans. The paper has argued that the effects of conquest and colonial education are still evident among us and will continue to be for some time unless some genuine efforts are made to redress the situation, notwithstanding the realization of political independence. It has been argued that several effects of colonial education on its recipients, one of the most noticeable ones, has been cultural uprootedness. This was effected through the imposition of the English language on the natives and the deliberate underplaying of the native languages resulting in the disturbance of the natural harmony between the culture and language of the Africans (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1993). Instead, a new and false harmony between African culture and the English language was forced on the African, resulting in his/her disorientation and uprootedness. Just as colonial education was instrumental in alienating, disorientating and uprooting the African, it should be engaged in, in efforts to de-root the African, except that that this time around, it will not be colonial education but education for *hunhu/ubuntu*, derooting and liberating the African. In addition, in as much as the domination of the western language over the indigenous languages of the colonised was crucial in uprooting the African, so in de-rooting the African, indigenous languages in line with the proposed education for *hunhu/ubuntu* need to be de-centered. Furthermore, if de-rooting is to be successful, the onus should be with us and not with assistance from elsewhere. The responsibility should not be left with teachers alone but rather a holistic approach where everyone is honestly and seriously committed. Thus, *hunhu/ubuntu* should be taught "in the home, to the children in the schools and to colleges students; from the pupils and platforms to audience and in the

fraternities and sororities to young men and women" (James, 1972: 160). Indeed, the youth cannot be sidelined in this exercise, notwithstanding the fact that they are the most uprooted, because they happen to be the leaders of tomorrow. So, in order to have a correct tomorrow, it is all the more important that today must be correct. *Hunhu/ubuntu* should know no boundaries and should be engaged everywhere, anytime by anyone. *Hunhu/ubuntu* should permeate and be the guiding principle in all the day-to-day activities. Indeed this calls for the effort of everyone but above all it calls for ideological commitment, especially from those in whose hands society has surrendered its trust to lead it.

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